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News Tribune



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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3 April 1979

Mr. Donald A. Pugnetti, Editor
Tribune Publishing Company
1950 South State Street
P.O. Box 11000
Tacoma, Washington 98411

Dear Mr. Pugnetti:

We have just read your recent editorial, Time to Rebuild the CIA of 20 March 1979. We appreciate your interest in intelligence and thought you might like to know that my office is available to provide information about the Intelligence Community and the CIA.

Quite often the facts and background data we provide helps clarify misconceptions and avoids misstatements of facts. We respond, for example, to some 15 to 20 queries daily from media representatives who wish to check the accuracy of their stories or, who have questions about our activities. We would be pleased to similarly assist you in the future.

The Public Affairs Office also disseminates some 150 unclassified research reports annually to the media and the public concerning subjects of general interest. In addition, we frequently provide unclassified background briefings to newsmen on substantive topics at their request. When possible we are pleased to host media representatives at the Agency for get-acquainted sessions.

We would welcome the opportunity to provide you such services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Herbert E. Hetu".

Herbert E. Hetu
Director of Public Affairs

HEH:car

Time to rebuild the CIA

The U.S. is at one of those critical junctures when it is crucial that it have the best possible information on which to base its foreign policy decisions.

Vital American and Western interests are at stake around the world. The situation in Iran serves to highlight the Middle East problem, where the potential for trouble is higher than ever. There is the continuing threat of chaos and shifting power alliances in southern Africa. And there is the tension that exists between mainland China and the Soviet Union.

How the White House and Congress react to events in these troublesome areas will depend to a great extent on the adequacy of the intelligence assessments received from the Central Intelligence Agency. And yet the CIA continues in disarray.

A wave of resignations and early retirements of senior officials recently demonstrated the seriousness of the CIA's morale problem. Combine these latest departures with last year's CIA

shakeup and it can only be concluded that the agency's effectiveness and performance must be low.

But despite these disturbing realities, Congress has shown a lack of urgency in meeting the problem. For two years, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence has worked to draft an "Intelligence Reorganization and Reform Act" and hasn't yet indicated when it will present the measure for consideration.

A great deal of time has been consumed in drawing up provisions designed to place controls over the activities of the CIA and its agents. To be sure, there is a need to guard against abuses of which the CIA was guilty in the past.

But Congress must not lose sight of the need to rebuild a CIA that can and will provide information essential to the nation's strength. Congress has had time enough to consider the problems of the past. Now it must realize that the intelligence needs of the present require action.

MR. DONALD A. PUGNETTI, EDITOR
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